

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KATHMA 05106 270232Z

71-62

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KATHMANDU 5106

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN, NP

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR PERMIT TO CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST

REF: STATE 278937

1. ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT THE CURRENT METHOD OF HANDLING CLIMBING APPLICATIONS FOR AMERICANS IS ALL THAT BAD, WE APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S DESIRE TO REDUCE THE PRESENT DEGREE, MODEST THOUGH IT IS, OF USG INVOLVEMENT IN GON CONSIDERATION OF SUCH APPLICATIONS. WE SEE NO SERIOUS PROBLEM IN TRYING ON THE GON THE LINE SUGGESTED IN PARA. 3 REFTEL, NAMELY THAT USG IS NOT IN A POSITION TO JUDGE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS FOR AN EXPEDITION SUCH AS THIS AND BELIEVES THE GON SHOULD CONSIDER APPLICATION ON ITS MERITS IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHATEVER REGULATIONS IT WISHES TO SET FORTH.

2. WE WOULD EMPHASIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WILL BE WORKABLE ONLY IF THE GON IS WILLING TO ACCEPT SUCH AN APPROACH. HERETOFORE, THE GON HAS INSISTED ON SOME KIND OF USG OR EMBASSY IMPRIMATUR AND WE HAVE TRIED TO KEEP THIS AS INDIRECT AS POSSIBLE, IN EFFECT FORWARDING TO THE GON THE PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION CARRIED OUT BY THE AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB.

3. IF THE GON CONTINUES TO INSIST ON A USG "ENDORSEMENT" OR ELSE NO LICENSE TO CLIMB, WE WILL BE BACK AT SQUARE ONE, SINCE THE WOULD-BE AMERICAN CLIMBERS WILL BE CLIMBING ALL OVER US FOR A SUFFICIENT DEGREE OF USG ENDORSEMENT TO

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PAGE 02 KATHMA 05106 270232Z

SATISFY THE GON. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCE, SINCE NEITHER THE

EMBASSY NOR, WE TAKE IT, THE DEPARTMENT CAN PROPERLY
EVALUATE A CLIMBING APPLICATION, WE WOULD SEE NO REASONABLE
ALTERNATIVE TO USING THE AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB FOR A PRO-
FESSIONAL JUDGMENT CONCERNING A PROPOSED AMERICAN
EXPEDITION - WHICH IS PRECISELY WHERE WE ARE NOW.

4. UNDER REFTTEL CONCEPT OF DETACHING THE USG FROM A
SUBSTANTIVE ROLE, WE SEE CONSIDERABLE OBJECTION TO INFORMING
THE GON THAT THE USG HAS "NO OBJECTION" TO A PROPOSED
EXPEDITION. "NO OBJECTION" CLEARLY IMPLIES A SUBSTANTIVE
JUDGEMENT ON THE MERITS OF A PROPOSED CLIMB. A "NO
OBJECTION" STATEMENT IS, IN THIS SENSE, INCONSISTENT WITH
THE ESSENTIAL THRUST OF THE INTENDED NEW USG POLICY, WHICH IS
NON-PARTICIPATION BY THE USG IN THE PROCESS. AS PARA. 4
REFTEL MAKES CLEAR, THE FOREIGN MINISTER HIMSELF HAS IN-
DICATED A NO OBJECTION STATEMENT FROM US IS ALL THAT IS
REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL OF REV. FORD'S EXPEDITION.

5. IN THE LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING WE SUGGEST WITH RESPECT
TO THE FORD APPLICATION A RESPONSE TO MFA PER THE LAST
SENTENCE OF PARA 3 REFTTEL. WE BELIEVE THE "NO OBJECTION"
SENTENCE SHOULD BE OMITTED. SIMILAR VIEWS WOULD NEED TO
BE CONVEYED TO SENATOR STEVENS AND MAYOR SULLIVAN.

6. ASSUME DEPARTMENT WILL DISCUSS CHANGE OF PROCEDURE
WITH AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB.

7. PLEASE ADVISE US OF DESIRED ACTION HERE BY NIACT
IMMEDIATE CABLE.
CARGO

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